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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5960
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RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 1514
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1335
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 0790
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1202

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 000802

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STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA (BEN-YEHUDA)
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [HA](#)

SUBJECT: ELECTIONS: ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL

REF: PORT AU PRINCE 653

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11. (U) Summary: Haitians went to the polls for yet another election on April 29. Electors cast votes for the one outstanding seat in the Chamber of Deputies in the commune of La Chapelle in the Artibonite department in a heated, though not exceedingly violent, atmosphere. Voting center workers reported problems with voter lists, a few attempts by people to vote multiple times, and attempts by bystanders to influence the voting. Poll workers allowed some voters not found on any voter lists to vote as long as they presented their National Identification Card (CIN) issued by the Provisional Electoral Council (CEP). Haitian National Police (HNP) and UNPOL stationed at the voting centers reported disruptions from party militants who attempted to intimidate competing party loyalists. Overall, HNP and MINUSTAH presence was strong and the day ended successfully, with ballots arriving intact at the tally center. End summary.

CEP Declares Victory

12. (U) Poloffs traveled to the commune of La Chapelle in the Artibonite department to observe the April 29 supplemental elections. (Note: The CEP declared all December 3 elections in La Chapelle invalid due to violence and destruction of ballots. This included the one outstanding race for a seat in the Chamber of Deputies. End note.) The CEP reported on the evening of April 29 that turnout was approximately 10 percent in urban areas and 30 percent in rural areas. Turnout was lowest in the West Department, at approximately 10 percent. All voting centers opened on time with all of their sensitive materials, with the exception of Ile de la Tortue (North West), where the ballots arrived late and voting centers opened an hour late. The CEP decided to allow the centers to remain open for an extra hour to compensate for the late opening. Acting CEP Director General Francois Benoit stated in a press conference that the CEP successfully instituted a "system of command and control" over these elections. Benoit stated that the CEP hopes to have results within three days, followed by the normal period of contestations. He predicted the final results will be ready by the end of May.

13. (U) The April 29 election marked the fourth attempt to elect a deputy from the La Chapelle commune. Candidate Hermano Exinord (Fusion) and P. Alix Macajoux (Artibonite in Action/LAAA) faced off in an animated election full of impassioned partisans on both sides. Fusion partisans came out in force on election day to challenge LAAA's stronghold on the region. The Fusion candidate, Exinord, told poloffs that 'It's hard to be a candidate here because LAAA is heavily armed and violent.' Fusion Senator Edmonde Supplice Beauzile (Central Plateau) spent the day in La Chapelle, in her words not as a senator but as the secretary general of Fusion. She reported that in Haut Martineau she witnessed a man claiming to be a civilian MINUSTAH employee beating another man 'until his nose bled.' HNP in Haut Martineau did not report the incident described by the senator, but did describe the senator's arrival at the voting center as a large disturbance. They said that a pickup truck carrying six men arrived with her, and drove into the surrounding hills and began blocking people from coming to vote. The populace subdued the men and brought them to the voting center, where HNP took them into custody. The policemen and UNPOL on the scene reported that the men in the pickup were Fusion partisans, and that they were from the capital, specifically Cite Soleil and Bel Air. Radio Metropole later reported that one of Senator Beauzile's security guards was arrested in the Artibonite.

14. (U) UNPOL in Haut Martineau reported that LAAA candidate Macajoux came to the center, cast his vote and left quickly without pausing to campaign. Deputy Astrel Gustinvil (LAAA) came to the Haut Martineau voting center, according to Senator Beauzile and HNP on the scene, but he did not create

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any disorder. (Note: Deputy Gustinvil represents the neighboring commune, Petite-Riviere de l'Artibonite. End note.) One official Fusion party representative at the National School of Bossous reported that LAAA partisans had arrived on the scene, threw rocks at a Fusion elector and broke the windshield of a car carrying Fusion militants. Poloff witnessed that one Fusion voter was indeed bleeding, but did not witness the incident. At the National School of Bossous, two men in police uniforms arrived and began shooting in the air to deter voters. HNP arrested the men and determined that one was a real police officer who was not on duty that day, and the other was an impostor. HNP, bystanders, and poll workers all reported to Poloffs that the men were LAAA militants trying to scare away Fusion voters.

Irregular Voting Center Procedures

15. (U) Poloffs witnessed one elector attempting to vote twice, and poll workers reported a few other incidents of double-voting, including one person who tried to vote in two different rooms and another who gave their CIN to someone else to use. Voting center staff immediately kicked out the offenders. In two separate voting centers (Bossous National School and La Chapelle National School), electors were allowed to vote using their CIN even if their names were not on the list. In both instances, the CEP-ordained manager of the centers made the decision to allow the votes. As is normal procedure, voting lists were posted outside of each room or 'bureau,' but the lists outside often did not match the lists inside the bureau which the workers used to check off electors as they came through. Both outside and inside the voting centers, militants from the various political parties attempted to pressure electors into voting for their candidates, according to national observers. In other parts of Haiti, one president of a communal electoral office (French acronym 'BEC,' of which there are several in each voting center) was fired, and another arrested for

contributing to election fraud.

Ballots Arrive Safely in Gonaives

16. (U) All ballots from La Chapelle arrived safely at the tally center at the MINUSTAH base in Gonaives on the evening of the election, divisionary commissar for the area Godson Orelus reported to Poloff on April 30. Commissar Orelus stated that he deployed all of his forces to assure that the problems of December 3 were not repeated. (Note: On December 3, citizens stole ballot boxes from the Haut Martineau voting center and burned them in the streets. End note.) According to Orelus, MINUSTAH safely transported the ballots to neighboring Verettes by 10:30 p.m., where they picked up more packets and departed for Gonaives, arriving at the MINUSTAH base around midnight. They did not encounter any improvised roadblocks along the way, nor did any citizens attempt to steal any sensitive materials. Orelus credited this to the large number of HNP he dispatched to patrol the area.

18 Arrested Across the Country

17. (U) According to the CEP, the HNP arrested 18 people across the country in election-related incidents. In addition to the arrests noted in paras 3 and 4, four men were arrested in La Chapelle for illegally bringing firearms into the voting center and then attempting to stuff ballot boxes.

18. (U) Comment: In La Chapelle, poloffs witnessed Haitian elections at their most contentious. The level of violence and fraud is not necessarily representative of all of Haiti, as demonstrated by the peaceful December 3 elections in the West Department. Poloffs were especially alarmed that voting center workers (and their supervisors) could not keep straight whether people not listed on the voter rolls should be allowed to vote or not. Fortunately, despite large crowds of excited political party militants at each voting center, HNP and MINUSTAH presence limited violent incidents. Four elections in a little more than a year was clearly more than

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desirable: electors, poll workers, HNP and MINUSTAH all expressed their frustration with running the deputy election for the fourth time. As much as Haitians may want to celebrate the end of elections, the next elections cycle is on the horizon with national elections for the Senate due in November 2007 (reftel).

SANDERSON